

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 4709

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EWWT, EG
SUBJECT: PROPOSED HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY

REF A. STATE 054033
B. CAIRO 14796 (1976)
C. CAIRO 15683 (1976)

1. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO EGYPT TO BE DERIVED FROM PROPOSED HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY SUB PARA 2 OF REF B) ARE PRIMARILY OF A CIVIL NATURE. THE SURVEY WOULD BE PERFORMED TO PREPARE FOR FOLLOW-ON ACTIONS TO PERMIT THE PASSAGE OF VERY DEEP DRAFT TANKERS TO AND FROM THE SOUTHERN TERMINUS OF THE SUMED PIPE-LINE, AND TO AND FROM A WIDENED AND DEEPENED SUEZ CANAL. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO EGYPT WOULD BE ALMOST ENTIRELY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, AND WOULD INCLUDE INCREASED FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS AS A RESULT OF POSSIBLE INCREASED USAGE OF THE SUMED PIPELINE AND THE SUEZ CANAL BY SHIPS WHICH OTHERWISE COULD NOT MAKE USE OF THOSE FACILITIES. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT INCREASED FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS WOULD ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH. AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT HAVE A BASIS FOR ESTIMATING THE MAGNITUDE OF SUCH BENEFITS.

2. GOE HAS NOT YET MADE A FORMAL REQUEST FOR THE SURVEY, NOR HAVE COGNIZANT EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES CONFIRMED THAT THE PRELIMINARY WORK STATEMENT CONTAINED IN REF
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TEL B REPRESENTS THE TASK WHICH THE U.S. IS TO BE ASKED TO ACCOMPLISH. DAO HAS BEEN PRESSING - THUS FAR ADEQUACY OF THIS PRELIMINARY WORK STATEMENT. IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS INPUT FROM EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES, IT WOULD APPEAR PREMATURE TO ACCEPT THE TASK AS DESCRIBED IN REF TEL B AS AN ACCURATE SUMMARY OF WHAT USG MAY BE ASKED TO ACCOMPLISH.

3. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE PRELIMINARY WORK STATEMENT AS CONTAINED IN REF TEL B MAKES NO PROVISION FOR U.S. TO CONDUCT DREDGING OR DEMOLITION OPERATIONS, DURING OR SUBSEQUENT TO THE HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY, IN ORDER TO ASSURE SAFE PASSAGE OF SHIPS IN THE AREAS TO BE SURVEYED. SUCH DREDGING/DEMOLITION IS A LOGICAL FOLLOW-ON TO THE HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY, AND THE SURVEY MIGHT PROVE TO BE OF ONLY LIMITED VALUE IF NOT FOLLOWED BY DREDGING OR DEMOLITION OF IDENTIFIED SHOAL AREAS. THIS BEING THE CASE, WE SHOULD REQUIRE FROM GOE A FULL EXPLANATION OF ITS PLANS FOR DREDGING OR DEMOLITION OPERATIONS SUBSEQUENT TO COMPLETION OF A HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY CARRIED OUT AND FUNDED BY USG.

4. WHILE THE REQUESTED HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY WOULD ENTAIL SOME DEGREE OF RISK DUE TO UNEXPLODED MINES, THIS RISK IS PROBABLY MINIMAL IN VIEW OF LENGTH OF TIME MINES HAVE BEEN IN WATER AND EXTENSIVE USE OF ENTIRE AREA BY SHIPPING DURING PAST TWENTY-ONE MONTHS. IN ANY EVENT RISK WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE SAME REGARDLESS OF WHETHER PROJECT PERFORMED BY AID AND US NAVY IN COMBINATION, OR BY OTHER MEANS. AS NOTED REF TEL (C), OVERT U.S. NAVY PARTICIPATION WOULD APPEAR HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICE TO SERVICE RELATIONSHIPS. ADDITIONALLY AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, USN ASSISTANCE IN THIS PROJECT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO BASIC US OBJECTIVE OF SUPPORTING EGYPT AND PRESIDENT SADAT AND STRENGTHENING CLOSE TIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND US.

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5. IN RESPONSE TO OTHER QUESTIONS IN PARA TWO OF REF (A) USAID ADVISES:

A) SINCE CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION WOULD APPEAR NECESSARY IN ANY EVENT AND SINCE THERE IS STILL FLEXIBILITY IN FY 77 AID PROGRAM, MISSION BELIEVES THAT INITIAL FUNDING FOR THIS ACTIVITY COULD BE PROVIDED IN FY 77 IF THAT WERE REQUIRED. HOWEVER, WE HAVE HAD NO DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTRY OF ECONOMY ON THIS QUESTION, AND DO NOT KNOW WHAT ITS OPINION WOULD BE CONCERNING DISPLACING OTHER ACTIVITIES IN FY 77.

B) IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE THAT SUPPORT FOR SURVEY BE A SEPARATE PROJECT. ITS MAGNITUDE IS SUCH THAT IT WOULD UTILIZE TOO GREAT A PART OF THE FEASIBILITY AND TECHNICAL STUDIES PROJECT, AND WE HAVE LARGELY LIMITED THE USE OF THAT PROJECT TO STUDIES OF ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH WE HAD THE INTENTION OF PROVIDING FOLLOW-ON CAPITAL OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, IF AID:W

WERE TO FIND IT EASIER TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL
IN TERMS OF AN EXPANSION OF THE FEASIBILITY AND
TECHNICAL STUDIES PROJECT, THE MISSION WOULD NOT OBJECT
TO THAT APPROACH.

C) INASMUCH AS PROPOSED SURVEY WOULD BE EIGIBLE
FOR FINANCING UNDER TECHNICAL AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES
GRANT IT WOULD BE REASONABLE TO FINANCE SEPARATE PROJECT
ALSO ON GRANT BASIS. THIS WOULD RAISE GRANT CONTENT OF
FY 77 AID PROGRAM FROM 4.5 PER CENT TO 5.5 PERCENT AS COMPARED WITH
26.8 PER CENT IN FY 74 THROUGH TQ.

D) AFTER RECEIPT CLEARER STATEMENT OF TASK USG
MAY BE ASKED TO ACCOMPLISH, WE WOULD SEEK ASCERTAIN
WHETHER ANY STUDY MAY EXIST HERE WHICH MIGHT BE BASIS
FOR CONCLUSIONS RE POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO BE ACHIEVED BY
PROVIDING PASSAGE FOR DEEPER DRAFT TANKERS. IN MEAN-
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TIME, AID/W MIGHT SEEK ASCERTAIN WHETHER SUCH STUDY MAY
EXIST IN SOME AGENCY USG OR WHETHER IT COULD BE EASILY
PREPARED BY USG AGENCIES.

6. PROPOSED HYDROGRPAHIC SURVEY HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF
DISCUSSION WITH HIGH LEVEL GOE AURHTORITIES. AMBASSADOR
EILTS, CURRENTLY IN WASHINGTON, IS FAMILIAR WITH THESE
DISCUSSIONS. RECOMMEND HE BE CONSULTED PRIOR ANY MAJOR
DECISIONS BEING TAKEN IN THIS MATTER.

GDS- 31 DEC 8
MATTHEWS

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